

A Notable Event

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"Why, brother," answered the other, "I met such a man not far from here, and truly, he carried venison on his shoulder; but how couldst thou describe him so nearly, see that thou wert away in the forest?"

"I am in haste," said Flying arrow, "but listen: I found a pile of stones under the hook where I hung my venison; had the thief not been short, he would not have needed these to stand on. I knew he must be older, for his footsteps were close together; and that he must be a white skin simply because the toes turned out, which, as thou knowest, an Indian's never do. Had his gun been long, its muzzle would have left no trace on the bark of the tree, as this one had done, as it leaned against it. So thou seest, brother, it was easy, after all, having eyes, to describe the thief."

"But the cur; how couldst thou tell its size, even to the tail?" asked the other Indian, who was young, as yet, and had not learned the value of close observation.

"Of what use would the eyes of flying Arrow be, had they not shown him at once that the dog's feet were near together as he walked on the sand, and that the short, bushy tail measured itself when he sat wagging it, watching his master unhooking my dinner? But farewell, brother; I must follow the trail, or I shall be too late to rescue my venison."

A NOTABLE EVENT.

ON the 17th of next June will occur the two hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the Upper Mississippi. In 1541 Hernando De Soto discovered the Lower Mississippi. But the existence of what is now known as the Upper Mississippi, with the natural garden that lies embosomed in its valley, indefinitely denominated the north-west, was a secret known only to God and the Red Man for a hundred and thirty-two years more.

Jacques Marquette, a French-Catholic Indian missionary, and Louis Joliet, a French Canadian fur trader, both young Jesuits, with five picked French *voyageurs*, having set out from the straits of Macinac in two birch bark canoes, May 17th, 1673, reaching the Wisconsin river through Green bay, Fox river, and the portage, paddled along till, on the 17th of June, floating into the mouth of the Wisconsin, they exclaimed with rapture, as they feasted their eyes on what met the vision of white men for the first time—the sublime scenery of the “Father of Waters”—“*Rio Grande, Rio Grande!*” giving the same idea as the Indian name of Mississippi.

After feasting on roast dog with the friendly Illinois tribes, the explorers pursued their course down stream below the mouth of the Arkansas, when the dangers and difficulties thickening, and the main objects of the expedition (the discovery of the course, direction, and probable outlet of the great river) having been accomplished, they returned to Green bay the following September, having made a tour of 2500 miles in open canoes, encountering many dangerous adventures by flood and field. Marquette's journal of the expedition was not telegraphed or even pony-expressed to the principal newspapers, but was leisurely published in Paris eight years afterwards, but in time to awaken universal attention throughout Europe.

The death of Father Marquette took place two years after his participation in the great discovery, at the early age of thirty-two years. Having founded a mission and erected the cross in the midst of the Illinois Indians (the first tribe he encountered on the banks of the Mississippi), at a place which he christened Kaskaskia (now in the state of Illinois), he proceeded on his return to Macinac. While passing up the eastern side of Lake Michigan, he sank in the bottom of his canoe exhausted. His faithful *voyageurs* landed their barque and tenderly bore him ashore, where they built a bark wigwam over him. Before an improvised altar he administered to himself and his companions the eucharist.

The boatmen, at his request, withdrew from his presence for a short time, and on their return found him dead in a kneeling posture opposite the little altar, with the crucifix before him. Thus in the wilderness passed away the soul of the good and brave Father Marquette, and he was buried on the bank of the beautiful little stream in Michigan which now bears his name. Joliet resumed his occupation as a fur trader, and died at a ripe old age in the beginning of the succeeding century.

These and their confreres, the discoverers and explorers of the northwest, in religious bent, pursuit, and education, were the antipodes of those who settled the New England colonies. The first, ardent, excitable, loyal to France and devoted to a broad religion, seeking in the vast wildernesses of the northwest conquests for their country and proselytes for the church, kept the secrets of Loyola and revealed those of a vast and hidden empire. The Massachusetts and Connecticut Pilgrims, on the contrary, were stern and calm, and scorning their sovereign and estranged from their country, acknowledging no superior on earth and panting for no earthly conquests or treasures, they lacked incentives to engage in hazardous enterprises, and were content in the cultivation of the sterile soil of their first settlement.

After the lapse of long years these two nuclei of western civilization have widened their circles of influence and progress so as to traverse each other's arcs, and from the attrition of these two opposite civilizations, French Catholic and British Puritan, what infinite modifications of both have sprung. So that now we have, not only the Catholic with his Cross and the Presbyterian with his Psalm Book, but the Methodist with his Hymn Book, the Episcopalian with his Prayer Book, and the Baptist with his Font, besides the Mormon with his new lights and revelations, and a dozen other modifications of religious organizations. Truly the history of two hundred years has enhanced the importance of Plymouth Rock and the discovery of the Mississippi.

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